

**First 5 SAN BERNARDINO**

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION FOR SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
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# Press Release

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## **First 5 San Bernardino Tightening the Belt**

First 5 San Bernardino hosted a mandatory Proposal Conference on Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. The Commission's goal for requiring attendance of potential contractors was to ensure successful proposals for the provision of much needed services to children ages 0 -5 and their families in San Bernardino County.

Commission Vice-Chair, Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare shared that First 5 San Bernardino has a lot less funds to invest. Due to the passage of AB 99 legislation, First 5 San Bernardino lost \$50 million from its fund balance. The total amount to be invested by the First 5 San Bernardino Commission for the Investing in Children RFP is \$57,450,000 for the next 3 year period. The amount budgeted for FY 2012/13 is not to exceed \$19,150,000 and that represents \$12,850,000 less than the current fiscal year.

Executive Director, Karen Scott expounded on what will be funded under the Investing in Children RFP. She stated that the most important emphasis is on supporting families to prevent growth in child welfare and foster care caseloads, providing screening to improve child health outcomes by diagnosing conditions early, when treatment is least costly and most effective and ensuring we are "closing the achievement gap" so that children are ready to enter and succeed in school. She also stated that with the current State budget deficit and looming cuts to services for families, First 5 funding has the potential to avert future costs to the State.

Scott stated that the targeted strategies may look very different, however with a much reduced budget, cuts had to be made and the funding focus narrowed. The Commission will oversee specific service delivery approaches in areas such as a defined parent education curriculum, time and resource limited case management, prenatal services that address the needs of pregnant women related only to substance/tobacco use interventions, subsidized child care targeted to parenting teens to reach education goals, and increased opportunities for children to obtain a preschool experience where they would not otherwise. The investment must be for services that are not currently funded or available. There can be no duplication of services.

A new pilot initiative was unveiled and involves partnering with Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities to address the health related concerns of families in their own neighborhoods.

Director Karen Scott reminded potential contractors that their work with public funds must "move the needle" in improving outcomes for children ages 0 -5.

The First 5 San Bernardino Commission is committed to these intentional strategies to meet the needs of local communities, and ensuring that children are safe, healthy and ready to enter and succeed in school and in life.

For more information please visit the First 5 website at [www.first5sanbernardino.org](http://www.first5sanbernardino.org)

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